

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 4044

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: OVIP, SHUM, PGOVN PINT, UY  
SUBJ: TODMAN PARTY MEETS WITH VEGH VILLEGAS

1. AT A BREAKFAST ON AUGUST 19, SECRETARY TODMAN, MESSRS. LISTER FEINBERG, O'MAHONEX, AMBASSADOR AND AID REP. HORWITZ MET WITH AKEJANDRO VEVH VILLEGAS, EX-MINISTER OF ECONOMY AND FINANCE, PRESENTLY COUNCILLOR OF STATE. VEGH IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS ECONOMIC REFORMS AND IS OFTEN MENTIONED AS A POTENTIAL PRESIDENT.

2. THE DISCUSSION BEGAN WITH A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE WORKINGS OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE. VEGH SAID ITS MEMBERS ARE BASICALLY DESIGNATED ON THEIR PERSONAL MERITS RATHER THAN AS REPRESENTATIVES OF REGIONS OR INTEREST GROUPS. ALTHOUGH THE COUNCIL IS NOT ALWAYS CONSULTED ON KEY GOV ACTION (E.G. INSTITUTIONAL ACTS) HE SAID IT DOES SERVE AS A USEFUL FORUM FOR DEBATING OFFICIAL ACTIVITIES. OCCASIONALLY, IT DOES DEMONSTRATE ITS INDEPENDENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE CONSWJO WILL APPROVE THE PROPOSED LAW ON "STATE OF DANGER" SINCE IT WOULD SANCTION DETENTIONS ON BASIS OF VAGUE PRECEPTS RATHER THAN SPECIFIC AND DEFINED CRIMINAL ACTS. HE SAID THE CONSEJO'S  
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INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS COMMISSION ALSO WAS USEFUL IN PASSING ON TO FAMILIES OF DETAINEES INFORMATION ON THEIR SITUATION.

3. IN A BROAD-RANGING DISCUSSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS TODMAN NOTED URUGUAY'S POOR INFORMATIONAL IMAGE AS A RESULT OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. MR. LISTER DESCRIBED HOW THIS IMAGE EVOLVED IN WASHINGTON AND THE PRICE URUGUAY IS PAYING

BY FAILING TO TAKE ACTIONS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION AND CORRECT ABUSES. VEGH NOTED THAT WHEREVER GUERILLA MOVEMENTS OCCUR, IT IS ALWAYS DIFFICULT TO CONTROL ANTI-VUERILLA OPERATIONS IN WAYS THAT AVOID ABUSES BUT DO NOT RISK THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OPERATIONS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY SO IN SITUATIONS WHERE INDIVIDUAL COMMANDERS HAVE BROAD AUTHORITY AND THERE IS ONLY LOOSE COORDINATION OVER SUCH OPERATIONS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE MILITARY TENDS NOT TO PUBLICIZE DISCIPLINE OF OFFICIALS COMMITTING HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES FOR MORAL REASONS BUT DOES EVENTUALLY PUNISH THEM. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT EVEN IF AFTER SMME TIME THE MILITARY PUBLICALLY REPORTED ON ITS ACTIONS TO DISCIPLINE OFFENDING OFFICERS, IT WOULD HELP URUGUAY'S IMAGE.

4. MR. FEINGBERG SUGGESTED WHERE MAXIMUM EFFECTIVENESN OF OPERATIONS IS THE KEY OBJECTIVE, ANTI-GUERILLA ACTIVITIES DEVELOP A CERTAIN LOGIC OF THEIR OWN WHICH LEADS TO ABUSES. VEGH AGREED AND INDICATED THAT, AS IN ROMAN TIMES, A CONSTITUTIONAL DICTATORSHIP COULD BE JUSTIFIED TO DEAL WITH A SPECIFIC EMERGENCY WHERE EXCEVTIONAL ACTIONS WERE LIMITED IN TIME, WHEN SUCH ACTIONS CONTINUED AFTER THE EMERGENCY, TYCANNY RESULTS. AS TO TME QUESTION WHEN THE EMERGENCY CAN BE DEEMED OVER, VEGH SAID WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS SECURE AND LAW AND ORDER IS RESTORED, THE EMERGENCY CAN BE CONSIDERED OVEC. HE SAID URUGUAY

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DOES NMT TODAY FACE AN EMERGENCY SITUATION CURRENTLY. HE AGREED WITH FEINBERG'S POINT THAT METHODS USED TO ATTACK SUBVERSION MAY BE INDISCRIMINATELY APPLIED AGAINST LEGITIMATE DISSENT AND CITED THE COUNCIL OF STATE ATTITUDE IN OPPOSITION TO THE "STATE OF DANGER" PROPOSAL IN THIS REGARD.

5. AMBASSADOR STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING URUGUAY'S POOR INTERNATIONAL IMAGE, HOW U.S.-URUGUAYAN RELATIONS ARE A VICTIM OF THAT IMAGE AND THE NEED FMR SOME POSITIVE GOU ACTION TO CHANGE THE IMAGE. THE GOU COULD ANNOUNCE THAT THE WAR WAS OVER AND BEGIN A NEW ERA. VEGH BELIEVED THE SUBVERSIVE THREAT WAS ALMOST INSIGNIFICANT AND AGREED THAT THE ANTI-SUBVERSION CAMPAIGN COULD BE REDUCED WITHOUT SERIOUS RISK. MR. LISTER SUGGESTED THAT ON A FUTURE VISIT TO WASHINGTON, VEGH MIGHT AGREE TO TALK INFORMALLY TO SOME CONGRESSMEN. VEGH AGREED SUBJECT TO CLEARANCE WITH AMBASUADOR PEREZ CALDAS. VEGH SAID HE FELT IT A MISTAKE FOR GOVERNMENTS NOT TO ACKNOWLEDGE NISTAKES OR ABUSESN ALTHOUGH IT WAS A HARD THING TO DO. ONE PROBLEM, HE NOTED, IS THE MILITARY'S FEAR OF DIVIDING THEMSEGVES IN QTE GOOD UNQTE AND QTE BAD UNQTE GROUPS FOR FEAR OF FUTURE RETRIBUTION WHEN

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT IS RESTORED.

6. THE CONVERSATION ENDED WITH A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON  
CURRENT ECONOMIC TRENDS WHICH WILL BE REPORTED SEPARATELY.

7. VEGH, AS A HIGHLY RESPECTED MEMBER OF THE  
GOVERNMENT, ATTEMPTED TO PUT THE GOU'S ANTI-SUBVERSIVE  
CAMPAIGN IN A HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE. HE  
BELIEVES THE EMERGENCY IS OVER, AND THAT THE TIME HAS  
COME TO LIFT RESTRICTIONS AND RESTORE BASIC RIGHTS.  
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## Message Attributes

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